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# Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Southern California A Big Winner From Federal Transportation Bill**

Los Angeles, CA—The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) applauds Congress for approving, and President Barack Obama for signing, a 27-month Surface Transportation Funding Bill through September 30, 2014. The bipartisan passage of HR 4348 legislation ensures that nearly three million jobs associated with transportation projects around the nation will be saved and or created, and that the infrastructure critical to the nation's global competitiveness will move forward.

California Senator Barbara Boxer, Chair of the Environment and Public Works Committee and author of *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21)*, applauded Congressional members from the Senate floor for their bipartisan and bicameral effort in approving a bill that will "help three million workers and thousands of businesses." The House passed the bill by a vote of 373-52, and then the Senate voted 74 – 19.

"Many bills are fashionably referred to as 'job creators.' This legislation truly lives up to this title as it authorizes the federal government to continue to levy an 18.4¢ excise gas tax that is collected on each gallon of gas at the pump. The revenues that are collected will be used to fund projects that repair and expand our nation's transportation system. This is the first time in nearly three years that Congress has worked together to pass a multi-year transportation bill since the expiration of the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Act, A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)* in September 30, 2009," said SCAG President and Simi Valley Councilmember, Glen Becerra.

"SCAG's Regional Council thanks the Congressional leaders for passing the \$105 billion federal transportation funding bill through 2014. This legislation will create 139,000 jobs per year in Southern California. Congress should be congratulated on the reforms contained within the bill regarding returning 95% of all gas tax revenues to the states, improvements for environmental project streamlining, reducing project delivery time, incentives for contracting and the creation of a national freight policy to ensure global competitiveness," he continued.

SCAG's Executive Director, Hasan Ikhata, thanked all of the Southern California elected officials and transportation agency leaders who worked together for the benefit of the region by stating, "Residents and businesses rely on an effective, efficient and safe regional transportation system. Passage of this legislation during an election year is an example of Congress putting politics aside and choosing to invest in our nation's long-term prosperity. Repairing bridges and potholes are not partisan matters."

"This important transportation legislation includes significant policy changes that benefits Southern California, such as: New freight policy provisions for the first time in order to ensure global competitiveness; incentives for innovative project delivery; reducing transportation project completion

delivery time; improved environmental streamlining; additional financing tools and a guarantee of 95% return of gas tax revenues from the current 92%," said Hasan.

Several Southern California transportation agency leaders commented on how the passage of MAP-21 will positively impact their communities:

- "After one extension after another, Congress finally came together and broke through the gridlock to pass the surface transportation bill. Importantly for Los Angeles, the bill includes America Fast Forward, the innovative, nationwide funding program that grew out of 30/10 - our plan to accelerate 30 years' worth of transit projects in 10 years." – Antonio Villaraigosa, Mayor, City of Los Angeles
- "Orange County Transportation Authority is very pleased that Congress included provisions that will implement OCTA's *Breaking Down Barriers* initiative in the new transportation bill. These provisions will accelerate transportation project delivery without sacrificing substantive environmental requirements." – Will Kempton, CEO, Orange County Transportation Authority
- "During the lifespan of this new bill, governments in Riverside County will start construction on 46 major projects throughout Riverside County and will pump \$1.6 billion in public works investment into the local economy." – Greg Pettis, SCAG First Vice President and Cathedral City Councilmember
- "In order to have a public transportation system that people can count on, it is imperative that we have a reliable funding stream. We thank Congress for enacting a two-year transportation bill that keeps Ventura County moving." – Darren Kettle, Executive Director, Ventura County Transportation Commission
- "Because Congress took the bold step of approving a multi-year transportation bill, Imperial County is now assured that we can accelerate the completion of the I-8/Imperial Avenue Interchange Reconstruction Project. The project is a top priority for the Imperial region as it reduces vehicle miles traveled and creates 250 jobs per year during the two-year construction period." – Mark Baza, Executive Director, Imperial County Transportation Commission

For SCAG's summary analysis of the HR 4348 (MAP-21), go to [www.scag.ca.gov](http://www.scag.ca.gov)

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### **About SCAG**

*SCAG is the nation's largest metropolitan planning organization, representing six counties, 191 cities and more than 18 million residents. SCAG undertakes a variety of planning and policy initiatives to plan for a livable and sustainable Southern California now and in the future. For more information about SCAG's regional efforts, please visit [www.scag.ca.gov](http://www.scag.ca.gov).*